



**Testimony of Goodwin University Opposing
S.B. 17: AAC PROHIBITING AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
FROM WITHHOLDING TRANSCRIPTS**

**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Public Hearing March 8, 2022
Testimony Submitted: March 8, 2022**

Dear members of the Joint Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

S.B. 17: AAC PROHIBITING AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FROM WITHHOLDING TRANSCRIPTS seeks to prohibit an institution of higher education from withholding a student's transcript for failure to pay a debt owed to the institution.

While Goodwin University understands and appreciates the intent of this bill, we must oppose.

Goodwin University, is a private, non-profit institution of higher education, located in East Hartford, with over 4,600 students (97% CT Residents) coming from 139 Connecticut cities and towns.

Goodwin, along with nearly every independent college in Connecticut has a policy in place such that student transcripts may be held for unpaid student fees, student conduct, as well as holds due to unreturned equipment or books.

Transcript hold policies allow for institutions of higher education to hold students accountable for obligations owed without immediately going to a collections agency, which could have a long term, detrimental impact on a student's future and could end up costing a student much more in the long run.

Transcript holds allow us to work with students to address the debts owed while they attended, and in most cases, received a credential from our institution. These holds may not require a student to fully pay their debts but allows us to work directly with the student to work out payment arrangements particularly for any past due amounts. Goodwin takes great care into considering personal circumstances in making these arrangements.

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It is our understanding that the public colleges in Connecticut do not allow a student to enroll for classes for the next semester if they have an unpaid balance. For the most part, Goodwin and other independent colleges in Connecticut allow a student to carry a balance forward, register for classes and persist in their education given that completion is so critically important to the long-term success of a student.

Further, the public colleges in the state have mechanisms in place to recover debts owed and may seek additional appropriations from the legislature to cover the costs of funds lost over the elimination of this policy.

With no alternatives, Goodwin, and other independent colleges will be forced to send past due accounts to collection agencies. In the long run, the elimination of the ability to place a transcript hold may result in increased tuition costs for students and their families.

We would ask the Committee to not move forward with this bill as it will have unintended, negative consequences for students and their families.

Mark Scheinberg, President
Goodwin University